

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The Honorable Jose Tomas Canales, a distinguished  
2 Texas lawyer and legislator and a cofounder of the League of United  
3 Latin American Citizens, was born on a ranch in Nueces County on  
4 March 7, 1877; and

5           WHEREAS, On his mother's side, Judge Canales was descended  
6 from Jose Salvador de la Garza, whose vast Spanish land grant,  
7 Espiritu Santo, once covered most of present-day Cameron County; he  
8 was also the grandnephew of Juan N. Cortina, a Mexican folk hero of  
9 the Lower Rio Grande Valley; and

10          WHEREAS, After receiving a law degree from the University of  
11 Michigan in 1899, J. T. Canales practiced law in Corpus Christi and  
12 Laredo for several years before settling in Brownsville; over the  
13 ensuing decades he held several public offices, including those of  
14 county superintendent of public schools in Cameron County, from  
15 1912 to 1914, county judge, in 1914, and Brownsville city attorney,  
16 from 1930 to 1940; and

17          WHEREAS, Judge Canales served a total of five terms in the  
18 Texas House of Representatives, from 1905 to 1910 and from 1917 to  
19 1920; while a member of the legislature, he supported suffrage for  
20 women and worked in particular on education, judicial and tax  
21 reform, and irrigation law; as chairman of the House Committee on  
22 Irrigation, he promoted legislation to establish public irrigation  
23 districts, and his work in bringing irrigation water to South Texas  
24 played a significant role in the development of commercial farming

1 in that region; and

2 WHEREAS, During the 1910s, a tumultuous period along the  
3 border, Judge Canales organized a company of Mexican American  
4 scouts to assist the United States Army in combating raids; he also  
5 demanded a legislative investigation in 1918 of the Texas Rangers  
6 that led to the reorganization of the force; and

7 WHEREAS, In the following decade, Judge Canales began to work  
8 with emerging Mexican American civil rights organizations; he  
9 helped to found LULAC in 1929, and he wrote most of its first  
10 constitution, served on its first board of trustees, and held the  
11 presidency of the organization in 1932 and 1933; and

12 WHEREAS, He fought on behalf of Hispanics in the courtroom,  
13 as well: in one case, he successfully represented Ramon Pizana, a  
14 man wrongfully accused of killing a Texas Ranger; Judge Canales  
15 served as an appellate attorney in *Del Rio ISD v. Salvatierra*, the  
16 first Texas case concerning the segregation of Mexican  
17 schoolchildren, and he was involved in *Delgado v. Bastrop ISD*, a  
18 milestone case in the struggle to eliminate the separate public  
19 education of Hispanics in Texas; and

20 WHEREAS, Judge Canales wrote for the *LULAC News* in the 1930s  
21 and published a number of works on religion, law, and history; among  
22 his most notable efforts were an account of economic development in  
23 South Texas and a treatise on "The Texas Law of Flowing Waters"; and

24 WHEREAS, Judge Canales was also a deeply religious  
25 gentleman, whose faith was embodied in his words, formal writings,  
26 and myriad activities; he died in Brownsville on March 30, 1976, at  
27 the age of 99; and

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1           WHEREAS, Through contributions ranging from the Latino  
2 struggle for civil rights to the development of South Texas and the  
3 creation of Texas water law, J. T. Canales left an immeasurable  
4 legacy that will continue to touch generations of citizens; now,  
5 therefore, be it

6           RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 79th Texas  
7 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of the Honorable Jose  
8 Tomas Canales for his exceptional contributions to the Lone Star  
9 State.

Oliveira

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.R. No. 599 was adopted by the House on March  
11, 2005, by a non-record vote.

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Chief Clerk of the House